

Local diamond store shines in customers' eyes

By Viola Brown

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When he was seven years old, Chris Carucci, Sr. told his mother that he wanted to be either a doctor or a jeweler. He eventually learned the latter trade from his father-in-law and has run Marilyn's Diamond Collection, Inc. on Johnson Avenue for more than 35 years.

"I didn't have a lot growing up, so I wanted to be a success," said Mr. Carucci, who named his store after his granddaughter. "Now my son calls me the Doctor of Jewelry."

For the third year in a row, customers have voted Marilyn's Diamond Collection, Inc. an American Express Member Favorite among small business customers and American Express cardholders who vote online for stores they enjoy patronizing.

"It's a nice honor and I'm thankful people took the time to vote," said Mr. Carucci. "The first year, I was surprised; second time, I was astonished; third year, I'm speechless."

He has worked in the area since 1972 and grew up among many of his customers. He said his success boils down to loyalty.

"The key ingredient is becoming friends with the customers," said Mr. Carucci. "I try my best to remember everyone's name."

For the past decade, his son Chris Carucci, Jr., a trained accountant, has helped with the family business and worked to bring it into the digital age.

The elder Mr. Carucci sees business going steadily and is trying to focus more on custom design work, which he said accounts for 20 to 30 percent of his profits.

"I look for customers that last a lifetime and treat people with old-fashioned courtesy, which is sometimes hard to find nowadays," said the proud owner.